

THE FACE & THE SOUL OF A MODEL A

By BILL WILLIAMSON

Chief (my dad) acquired his mechanical skills patching up those “blasted” Model T Fords, but he never seemed to develop a love for the T’s.

When the Model A came out Chief said they were like the car of the future when compared to the “Tin Lizzie.” They were FAST, great steering, brakes that would stop on a dime and give you 2 cents change, and they would pull Elm Hill in high gear with the whole back of the car piled full of groceries.

Chief and his buddy, Elbert, walked three miles through the woods just to see “old man Lewis’ new Model A sedan. Great old man, he even took them back home with a stop at Pritchett’s store for gas.

Years went by, Model A’s in various states of neglect became available, Chief would acquire all sorts of Model A’s, spare motors, rear ends, radiators, wheels until our front yard looked like a miniature wrecking yard.

Out of this “mess” he would put together some pretty good old Model A’s to sell, as he stated, “So we could eat.”

While he assembled this crap into running cars, he taught me a lot skills on Model A technology and explained that the cars all have a face and a soul, and, oh yes, they can talk to you if you listen very closely. They won’t tell you their history though. When they’re running good, they make a deep clucking sound, kind of like a happy hen scratching in the dirt. They can talk about their ailments, and parts that don’t function well. They won’t tell you how to fix them, Chief said ”That’s mine and your job to find it and fix it.”

My dad put a lot of humor into car repair and explaining how systems worked, like those little “men” that ran up and down inside the wires, making electrical stuff work. When a problem was difficult to nail down, Chief would say, ”Well, men designed and built this mess, And men can also find the problem and fix it.”

I remember all that stuff, and yes, I do talk to my Model A’s, but our conversations are VERY PRIVATE.

P.S. No, we weren’t that next door neighbor with all the “junk” in the yard. We lived alone at the end of a mile and a half dirt road, the front yard was selected because that’s where the SHADE TREE WAS LOCATED. It was a dude tree that could park three cars and had huge limbs that supported a CHAIN HOIST!
B.W.

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